



STATE OF WASHINGTON
HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

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HECB awards grant to CWU to improve campus child-care program

OLYMPIA - The Washington Higher Education Board (HECB) will award to Central Washington University in Ellensburg a state grant to enhance its on-campus child-care facilities for students.

“This award of money provided by the Legislature will help Central Washington University provide child-care services for its students,” said Marc Gaspard, HECB executive director. “The state is committed to helping students complete their higher education programs. For students with young children, having dependable child care can mean the difference between earning a degree or dropping out.”

CWU will use the funds to enhance child care for infants and toddlers through the university’s on-site Child Care Central, and will begin to offer evening and weekend care through the Early Childhood Learning Center, another program on campus.

“We distributed a survey to parents this quarter, and the results were very much in favor of extending center hours,” said Janie Charlton, CWU early childhood program manager. “We are constantly gauging student needs for childcare. Over the years, we have expanded our summer hours to better serve students’ class schedules. This is a natural direction for us to go.”

The 2001 Legislature provided \$150,000 in state funds for child-care grants to be distributed by the HECB through competitive bid process for public four-year colleges and universities. The Legislature provided a separate pool of money for community and technical colleges.

This round of grants for child care follows the first series of grants in 1999. Three universities received the first round of grants: Central Washington University (\$70,906); Eastern Washington University (\$29,025); and Washington State University (\$50,069).

In its first child-care grant, CWU offered infant and toddler programs that began in June 2000. School officials said the first program slots filled quickly, and the program grew to 32 slots this fall. The HECB said the new grant funds will allow the infant and toddler program to continue its successful operation and improve quality. The HECB grant will also enable CWU to enhance training for students and parents, and to offer some financial assistance to parents to help with the cost of child care services.

The funds also will expand the hours of the Early Childhood Learning Center to include evening and weekend programs, beginning early next year. The HECB said students have classes, projects and other activities that make the need for child care at these times critical.

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